

Wolf population continues to grow in Oregon

2020 population is a 9.5% increase over 2019

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
Capital Press

SALEM — Oregon's gray wolf population continued to climb in 2020, with at least 173 individuals documented by year's end, according to state wildlife officials.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife released its annual Wolf Conservation and Management report on Wednesday, April 21, which includes a minimum known count based on verified evidence, such as tracks, sightings and remote camera photographs.

The 2020 population is a 9.5% increase over the end of 2019, when ODFW recorded at least 158 wolves.

Wolves started returning to Oregon in 1999 following campaigns decades earlier to eradicate the species across the West. The Wenaha Pack was the first to become reestablished in the far northeast corner of Oregon in 2008, and the population has been slowly but steadily rising every year over the past decade.

"While Northeast Oregon continues to host the majority of the state's wolf popu-



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife/Contributed Photo, File
Oregon's gray wolf population continued to climb in 2020, with at least 173 individuals documented by year's end, according to state wildlife officials.

lation, dispersal to other parts of Oregon and adjacent states continues," said Roblyn Brown, ODFW wolf program coordinator.

A total of 22 packs were also documented in 2020, the same number as in 2019. Of those, 17 qualified as breeding pairs, having an adult male and adult female with at least two pups that survived to Dec. 31, 2020.

Under the ODFW wolf plan, management is divided

into eastern and western zones. In Eastern Oregon, wolves now fall under Phase III of the plan, which means the population has reached at least seven breeding pairs for three consecutive years.

West of highways 395, 78 and 95, wolves are still under Phase I of the plan, and will not move into Phase II until there are four breeding pairs for three consecutive years.

The different phases determine how local wildlife biol-

ogists and ranchers may respond to wolves that habitually prey on livestock — a standard known as chronic depredation.

Chronic depredation in Phase I is defined as four confirmed attacks on livestock in six months, after which ODFW can consider killing problem wolves. In Phases II and III, chronic depredation changes to two confirmed kills in nine months.

All phases require ranchers to use nonlethal deterrents to haze wolves away from their herds, such as range riders, flashing lights or alarm boxes.

ODFW confirmed 31 livestock depredations in 2020, up 94% from 2019. However, 16 of those were attributed to the Rogue Pack, whose range straddles Jackson and Klamath counties in Southwest Oregon.

While ODFW removed wolves from the state endangered species list in 2015, gray wolves remained federally protected in Western Oregon during all of 2020.

Over the course of 99 days between July 30 and Nov. 25, 2020, ODFW partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and USDA Wildlife Services to limit depredations by the Rogue Pack, including coordinated nighttime patrols to haze wolves out of livestock pastures in the Wood River Valley.

Despite those efforts, wolves continued to prey on cattle in the area.

"The personnel costs of this collaboration (with USFWS, USDA and ODFW) were significant during the four months," Brown said. "We appreciate the work of our partners and all livestock producers for their efforts to coexist with wolves."

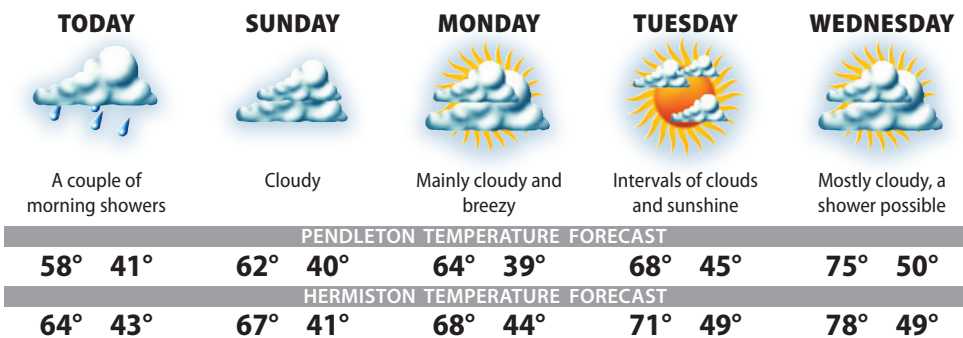
Ranchers may be compensated for wolf-livestock losses from the Oregon Department of Agriculture's Wolf Depredation Compensation and Financial Assistance Grant Program. ODA awarded \$251,529 to 12 counties in 2020, up from \$178,319 awarded in 2019. The program also helps pay for purchasing and implementing nonlethal deterrents.

Gray wolves were officially removed from the federal Endangered Species Act across the Lower 48 states in January under a rule finalized by the Trump administration. Six environmental groups have since sued to overturn the delisting.

Sristi Kamal, senior Oregon representative for the group Defenders of Wildlife, said increasing wolf numbers are encouraging, though long-term recovery is still dependent on addressing multiple threats including poaching and pushes for predator control measures.

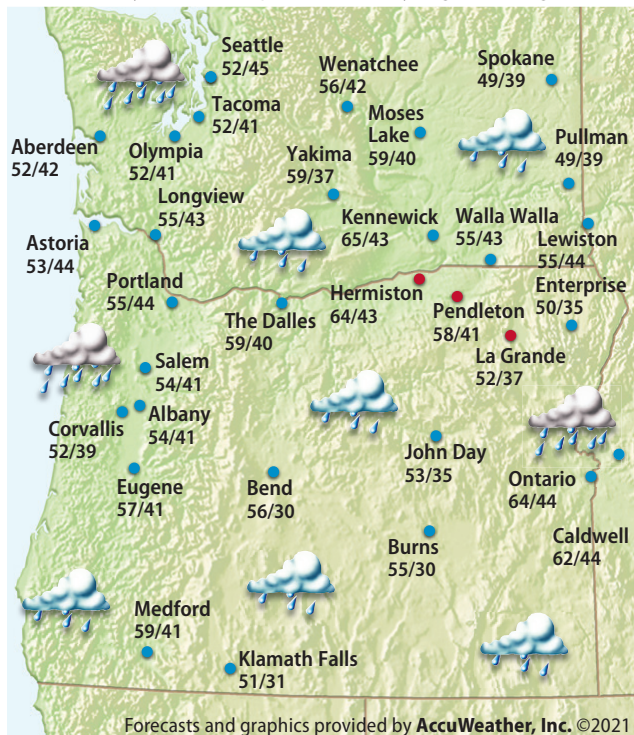
"We have an opportunity in Oregon to ensure habitat connectivity and establish a landscape where wolves and people are both able to flourish," Kamal said in a statement. "Defenders of Wildlife is committed to working with agency staff, landowners and ranchers to make this happen."

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	64°	44°
Normals	64°	40°
Records	89° (1910)	26° (2013)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date Trace
Normal month to date 0.90"
Year to date 3.34"
Last year to date 5.05"
Normal year to date 4.86"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	67°	46°
Normals	67°	41°
Records	86° (2012)	24° (2013)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date Trace
Normal month to date 0.64"
Year to date 1.20"
Last year to date 0.51"
Normal year to date 3.75"

WINDS (in mph)
Today Sun.
Boardman WSW 10-20 WSW 8-16
Pendleton WSW 7-14 WSW 7-14

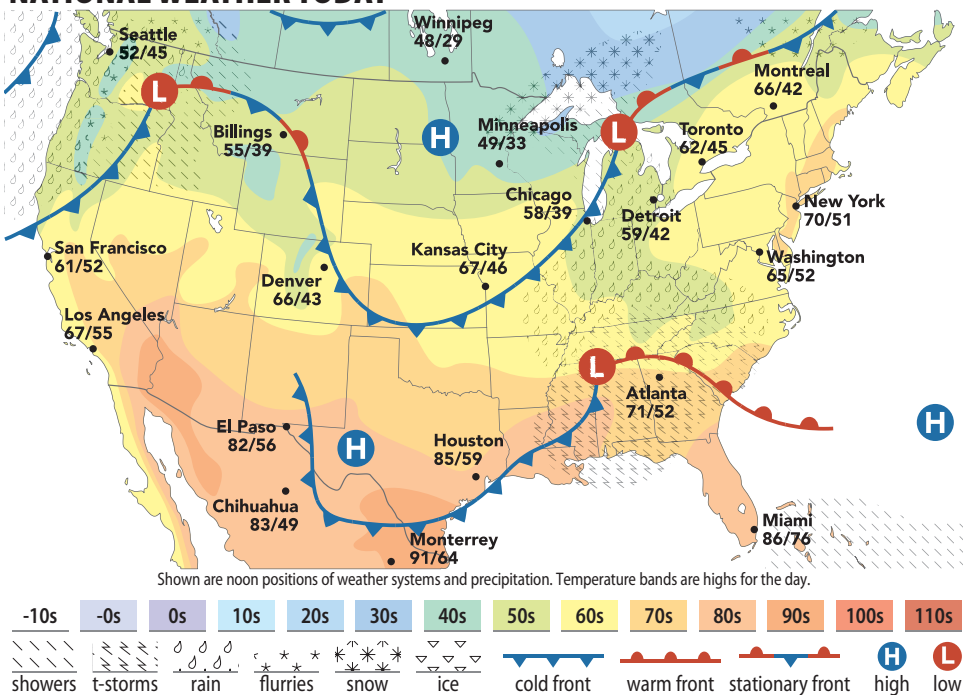
SUN AND MOON
Sunrise today 5:54 a.m.
Sunset tonight 7:53 p.m.
Moonrise today 5:00 p.m.
Moonset today 5:06 a.m.

Full Last New First
Apr 26 May 3 May 11 May 19

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 99° in Zapata, Texas Low 9° in Dillon, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



'Normal' returns to Wallowa Lake State Park in time for summer

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA LAKE — Things are getting back a bit more to normal this year, now that state parks are beginning to reopen — including Wallowa Lake State Park, which began taking reservations earlier this month for group campsites that open May 1.

According to a press release from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, some state parks started taking reservations April 15. A complete list of which ones are opening is available at the OPRD website at www.oregon.gov/oprd/Pages/index.aspx.

Mac Freeborn, manager at Wallowa Lake State Park, said a few campers already were at the park. But they were the ones who could do without park-provided water, which won't be turned on until May 1.

"My park has been taking reservations for a while now," he said. "The ones opening May 1 are group campsites."

The park's website bills it as being "ideally positioned as a base camp for both wilderness treks and water sports fun."

He said those there now are ones who take advantage of the park's opening throughout the offseason.

"We had a recent request for more reservations ... and we're accepting walk-ins," he said.

Last year, the park was forced to be closed until June 5 by the closures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The group facilities are reopening after being closed for more than a year due to revenue shortfalls and reduced staffing associated with COVID-19.

"Summer is quickly approaching, and we want to give visitors plenty of time to plan their group events," said

Jason Resch, communications manager for the OPRD. "Although we can't open all group areas in all parks and the lower group limits isn't what we are used to, we ask for your patience as we move forward."

But now it's returning to closer to normal.

"As normal as it can be," he said. "We're back on track for bringing back seasons in hiring. ... Normal is a subjective term, but we're going to be back for full operation this summer."

He said the docks won't go back into the water until around May 1.

"We start really ramping up things in early May," Freeborn said.

But campsite reservations are already nearly fully booked.

"If people are not finding anything online, it's because we're already booked. It's been fast and furious with reservations," Freeborn said.

IN BRIEF

Three bills honoring veterans headed to House for final vote

SALEM — An Oregon House committee approved a trio of bills on Thursday, April 22, that honor military veterans.

Retired Army Lt. Col. Dick Tobiason, of the Bend Heroes Foundation, testified in the virtual hearing in support of the bills.

"We appreciate your work," Rep. Paul Evans, D-Monmouth, chair of the House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management, told Tobiason.

The bills have all passed the Senate and after the House committee approval go to the House floor for final passage, then to Gov. Kate Brown to sign into law.

Senate Bill 790 approves naming the Oregon portion of U.S. Highway 30 as the Oregon Veterans Memorial Highway. The highway runs from Astoria to Portland, then west through Hermiston, Pendleton, La Grande and Baker City before leaving the state near Ontario on the Idaho border.

Senate Bill 319 would dedicate an area in the State Capitol State Park for a Vietnam War memorial to be paid for and built using funds from a nonprofit corporation.

Senate Bill 441 modifies the criteria for erecting roadside memorial signs for deceased veterans to include former prisoners of war and missing in action previously unaccounted for, but whose remains have been discovered in recent years.

— EO Media Group

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